

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
LEWIS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

**IN THE MATTER OF:**

RESOLUTION NO. 21-332

ISSUE A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) LEWIS COUNTY SEEKS PROPOSALS FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE THAT WILL PROVIDE AFFORDABLE, EQUITABLE, HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND ACCESS IN LEWIS COUNTY

**WHEREAS**, the Lewis County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) adopted "Vision 2025," a Strategic Plan for the county identifying five main Directives, including initiatives to expand access to reliable, high-speed internet across the County and address the digital divide; and

**WHEREAS**, Lewis County has experienced significant growth over the years. However, the County faces challenges that impede continued economic growth and business recruitment. The most impactful of these challenges includes a lack of reliable high-speed internet, which continues to be a major hurdle for many residents during the COVID-19 pandemic and associated shutdowns of schools and businesses; and

**WHEREAS**, Lewis County is the largest county in western Washington; it covers 2,452 square miles, is rectangular in shape, and measures about 90 miles (east to west) by 25 miles (north to south). The elevation in Lewis County varies widely. The broad, relatively flat and low-lying western section of the county gives way to the rugged Cascade Mountains in the east, creating a challenging landscape for a cost-effective approach to broadband access to all Lewis County residents; and

**WHEREAS**, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 appropriated \$130.2 billion to remain available through December 31, 2024, for payments to metropolitan cities, non-entitlement units of local government; \$65.1 billion of this appropriation was reserved to make payments directly to counties based on their population and to mitigate the fiscal effects of the COVID-19 emergency including necessary investments in broadband infrastructure. The Plan also appropriated \$10 billion for payments to States, territories, and Tribal governments to carry out critical capital projects. Each state will receive a minimum of \$100 million with the remaining \$4.8 billion allocated to states based on population, rural population and household poverty; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Treasury oversees the funding allocations and rules associated with the American Rescue Plan. The Interim Final Rule outlines guidance for use on broadband infrastructure as the following:

- Prioritize investments in fiber optic infrastructure where feasible.
- Avoid investing in locations with existing agreements to build reliable wireline service with minimum speeds of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload by December 31, 2024.
- Focus on projects that deliver a physical broadband connection by prioritizing projects that achieve last-mile connections.
- Consider ways to integrate affordability options into program design.
- Use strong labor standards, including project labor agreements and community benefits agreements that offer wages at or above the prevailing rate and include local hire provisions

**WHEREAS**, the BOCC has requested an RFP process to evaluate broadband options in order to address the underserved and unserved areas of the county, leveraging ARPA funds available through the county, state and federal agencies.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** the BOCC requests proposals to fill broadband gaps and directs the County Manager to prepare a request for proposals (RFP), evaluate responses, provide recommendations to the BOCC, and negotiate a contract; and the Clerk of the Lewis County BOCC is instructed to proceed with all appropriate and necessary notifications, posting and publication as required.

DONE IN OPEN SESSION this 21st day of September, 2021.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:  
Jonathan Meyer, Prosecuting Attorney

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
LEWIS COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Andrew Logerwell  
By: Andrew Logerwell,  
Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

Absent  
Gary Stamper, Chair

ATTEST:



Lindsey R. Pollock, DVM  
Lindsey R. Pollock, DVM, Vice Chair

Rieva Lester  
Rieva Lester,  
Clerk of the Lewis County Board of  
County Commissioners

Sean D. Swope  
Sean D. Swope, Commissioner



**LEWIS COUNTY NOTICE FOR:  
Request for Proposals (RFP)  
Filling Broadband Gaps in Lewis County**

Lewis County seeks proposals for the deployment of infrastructure providing affordable, equitable, high-speed broadband access to all residents, businesses, and anchor institutions in unserved and underserved areas of the County in support of economic development, education, health care, and general public use.

The County understands that supplementary funding will be required to fill today's service gaps and intends to secure such funding, by providing potential County funds and by working with respondents to seek grant funding. The County is also willing to entertain both public and private partnerships in order to achieve these goals.

Proposals must be marked "Broadband Proposals" Attention: Erik Martin and be delivered to the Lewis County Commissioners' Office Rm. 210, 351 NW North St., Chehalis, WA 98532. This RFP is ongoing with a first review on October 1, 2021.

The County requires the vendor submit four (4) original printed proposals (e-mails or faxes are not accepted). Completed proposal packets are limited to ten (10) pages, double-sided if needed.

For more information about the project and submittal requirements contact Erik Martin at 360-740-2697 or email [erik.martin@lewiscountywa.gov](mailto:erik.martin@lewiscountywa.gov) or visit [www.lewiscountywa.gov/offices/commissioners/bocc-legal-notices](http://www.lewiscountywa.gov/offices/commissioners/bocc-legal-notices) for an information packet.

DATED this 21st day of September, 2021.

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners

Lewis County, WA

PUBLISH: The Chronicle – September 23, 25 and 28, 2021

Lewis County website @[www.lewiscountywa.gov](http://www.lewiscountywa.gov)



## **PURPOSE & GENERAL PROCESS**

Lewis County seeks proposals for the deployment of infrastructure providing affordable, equitable, high-speed broadband access to all residents, businesses, and anchor institutions in unserved and underserved areas of the County in support of economic development, education, healthcare, and general public use. The County understands that supplementary funding will be required to fill today's service gaps and intends to secure such funding, by providing potential County funds and by working with respondents to seek grant funding. The County is also willing to entertain both public and private partnerships in order to achieve these goals.

Broadband access is defined as service of at least 25 Mbps download/3 Mbps upload, but the County strongly prefers investments in network infrastructure that can deliver at least 100 Mbps download speeds, ideally with symmetrical upload speeds, to accommodate present and future bandwidth-hungry applications.

### **Respondents must:**

- Provide an estimate of the overall cost of the project, including both capital and soft costs (planning, engineering, permitting, administration, etc.)
- Provide a financing plan, including how much of that cost the respondent is willing to provide, how much is intended to be borne by the county, any intended grant funding sources, and any remaining funding required to make the project financially sustainable.
- Provide an ownership plan including what level of County-owned, private-owned, or other publically-owned infrastructure the respondent would use, or install if it were available, where this infrastructure would be needed, and what lease rates the respondent would pay.

Lewis County is open to entertaining multiple proposals and reserves the right to make awards to one or more proposals which best serve those unserved and underserved areas to make efficient use of public funds. Projects may provide for "backbone," "middle-mile," or "last-mile" infrastructure as well as direct consumer service. The County intends to target future funding opportunities, including but not limited to forthcoming federal grants, such as the infrastructure grant program administered by the National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA) as well as funds available through the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA). Information on Federal Broadband funding can be found on the National Telecommunications and Information Administration website and the Interactive Federal Funding Guide <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/news/latest-news/ntia-releases-interactive-federal-funding-guide>

The County may ask the selected partner or partners to support the County in grant applications and provide cost proposals, including the division of respondent funding and required grant funding for the proposed service areas. If the respondent has a limited ability to support the County in such applications, the respondent should explain those limitations in its response to this RFP.

The County reserves the right to issue future RFPs to add qualified candidates to the candidate pool if implementation projects deriving from this RFP are not able to cover all areas of need and require the pursuit of later funding opportunities.

## **ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

The respondent will enable the County to close the gap between served and unserved areas of the County, with the following considerations reflecting the strategic broadband objectives of the County:

- A. To improve internet access – in terms of speed and reliability – to the greatest number of locations feasible.

B. To expand broadband – defined as a minimum of 25 Mbps download, and 3 Mbps upload – to the largest number of unserved locations feasible.

C. To adopt the fastest and most future-proof technology feasible.

D. To develop a partnership in which both parties collaborate and contribute resources to solve the problem of delivering broadband to unserved areas in the County.

E. To deliver the broadest impact to the public good and welfare of County residents and businesses. The County favors respondents to contribute matching financial contributions to the project at a level the respondents consider sustainable.

### **STATEMENT OF WORK TO BE PERFORMED**

Respondents will work in supporting the County in its grant application submission or submissions. Should the respondent receive an award, the County expects the respondent to work with the County to provide any follow-up information required to the funder and enter into a contract with the County to construct the proposed network. Estimated address points, to the extent available, will be provided to potential applicants.

### **EXPECTED SCHEDULE**

RFP Posted – 9/21/2021

Questions Due – 9/27/2021

Proposals Due – 10/1/2021

Contract Negotiations/Award – TBD

### **PROPOSAL**

Proposals should incorporate the following elements in listed order: If a section is not applicable to the proposal, please include the section and explain why the section does not apply.

<b>Section</b>	<b>Description</b>
1.	Title Page
2.	Table of Contents
3.	Letter of Transmittal
4.	Profile of Respondent
5.	Route Mileage
6.	Description of Technology Used
7.	Numbers of Addresses Passed
8.	Service and Product Offerings
9.	Project Timeline
10.	Low-Cost Program
11.	Grant Opportunity Participation
12.	Cost Proposal
13.	Match
14.	References
Attachment - Non-Collusion Statement	

1. Title Page – List the RFP subject, the name of the organization, the local address, telephone number, name of the contact person and date.

2. Table of Contents – Include a clear identification of the material included in the proposal by page number.

3. Letter of Transmittal – Limit to one (1) page. State a positive commitment to perform the required work within the time requested. Also, provide the name(s) of the person(s) who will be authorized to make representation for your firm, their title, and telephone numbers.

4. Profile of Respondent – Provide a detailed profile of your organization and the work you perform. If you are an existing ISP in the County, state your service area and approximate number of subscribers in the County. In addition, provide the following information:

- a. State whether your firm’s operations are local, national, or international in scope
- b. Provide number of years you have offered internet service or access to broadband infrastructure to paying customers/subscribers and where
- c. Provide approximate number of customers/subscribers inside and outside the County
- d. Give the location of the office from which the work is to be done
- e. Any other information you believe is relevant for demonstrating your depth of experience and ability to deliver high-quality service

5. Route mileage – Respondent should list the areas it will serve and provide estimated miles of underground and aerial construction. In addition, the respondent may also indicate underground and aerial segments in a map illustration with appropriate legends. Respondent may also make an assumption of relative proportion of underground vs aerial construction as part of its process of generating a cost proposal. If so, it should indicate the proportions used without necessarily indicating aerial vs underground segments on a map.

6. Description of technology used – For example “Fiber optic cable,” “Coax cable,” “ADSL,” “DSL,” “satellite,” etc. If multiple technologies are used, describe how technologies will be deployed and which technologies will be deployed where.

7. Numbers of Addresses Passed broken down by technology and speed tiers – This would be a single line if a provider intends to use a single technology capable of reaching the same performance tier, such as “5,000 locations with Gigabit Symmetric using FTTH.”

8. Service and Product Offerings - Provide a narrative overview (limit 1 page) of the services and products to be offered with detail on pricing for consumers by speed of services. Include a summary table as structured below (Service Offerings Summary) and information about costs related to customer-premises equipment (CPE) and any other relevant information that is important to be considered.

<b>Broadband Performance Tier</b>	<b>Speed (Mbps)</b>	<b>Monthly Service Cost</b>	<b>One-time cost/activation fee</b>	<b>Recurring CPE Cost (to Customer)</b>

9. Project Timeline – Include a project timeline that highlights the order of segments for construction. Include a brief narrative description of the segmentation and order of the approach and reasoning for the order of the approach. Respondents should note any roadblocks. Include assumptions such as (but not

limited to) number of work crews, make ready timelines, and anticipated issues around material lead times.

10. Low-Cost Program – State whether the respondent offers or supports a low-cost program for eligible subscribers (such as low-income households), the eligibility requirements for such programs, and – if relevant – the proportion of current subscriber base participation in such programs.

11. Grant Opportunity Participation – State whether the respondent can support grant applications and any restrictions on the respondent's ability or willingness to participate in joint grant opportunities.

12. Cost Proposal – The cost should include the total project cost.

13. Match – The dollar amount and percentage the respondent would contribute from the above price proposal.

14. References – Provide a minimum of three (3) industry or municipality references that demonstrate the respondent's ability to successfully plan, implement, and deploy broadband network products and services using innovative public or private environments. Include name, title, organization, phone number, and email address.

## **EVALUATION OF THE PROPOSALS**

Lewis County will evaluate the responses based on the following criteria to determine the finalist(s):

### **Qualifications and Experience**

1. Experience with similar projects;
2. Demonstration of ability to perform work;
3. Leadership structure;
4. Project manager's experience;
5. Management approach;
6. Financial condition; and
7. Project ownership.

### **Project Characteristics**

1. Project definition;
2. Proposed project schedule;
3. Operation of the project;
4. Technology and technical feasibility;
5. Conformity to laws, regulations, and standards;
6. Environmental impacts;
7. State and local permits; and
8. Maintenance of the project.

### **Project Financing**

1. Cost and cost benefit to the County;
2. Financing and the impact on the debt burden of the County;
3. Financial plan, including the degree to which the proposer has conducted due diligence investigation and analysis of the proposed financial plan and the results of any such inquiries or studies;
4. Opportunity costs assessment;

5. Estimated cost;
6. Life-cycle cost analysis; and
7. The identity, credit history and past performance of any third party that will provide financing for the project and the nature and timing of its commitment, as applicable.

### **Community Impacts**

1. Impacts, interactions, and future plans with the County's existing providers;
2. Comments at the public hearing on the proposals;
3. Neighborhood and community development impacts, if any; and
4. Economic development impacts.

The County may, at its discretion, request any or all respondents to clarify information presented in the submission. Lewis County will select and rank finalist(s) based upon the criteria outlined above. The County may request a formal presentation by finalists it selects.

The County and the respondent (or respondents) will enter into the negotiation period to refine the vision for the project and finalize the terms of an agreement. If no agreement can be negotiated, the County will enter into negotiations with the highest-ranked remaining respondent or respondents and so on until an agreement is reached.

### **TRADE SECRETS & PROPRIETARY INFORMATION**

All information submitted is presumed to be open to public inspection following the deadline for submissions in accordance with the WA Public Records Act. (Ch. 42.56 RCW) However, responders may designate information that it believes is proprietary and confidential, which will not be disclosed, in accordance with applicable law. However, this is subject to the following criteria:

- The proposal must reasonably and thoughtfully differentiate confidential from non-confidential information and mark confidential pages accordingly. Proposals that are designated confidential in their entirety will not be protected from disclosure.
- The responder must clearly invoke this protection, in writing, in its cover letter and executive summary.

The responder must submit a letter or memorandum stating the reasons why protection is necessary. Upon receipt of a proposal that designates portions as confidential and proprietary, the County Prosecutor will make a determination of the applicability of the exclusions, and send a proposer a written determination of the scope and applicability of the protection. The responder may then remove its entire proposal or the unprotected information from consideration, at its election, by taking prompt action.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

All responders must submit the non-collusion form attached to this proposal. Responders are reminded that collusion, kickbacks, attempts to contact and influence decision-makers on this solicitation, and other activity designed to improperly influence the process not only will disqualify any responder from consideration. Responders or potential responders should not contact or attempt to contact any member of the Board of County Commissioners. All such inquiries should be directed to the County Manager.



**NON-COLLUSION STATEMENT**

My signature certifies that the accompanying proposal is not the result of, or affected by, any unlawful act of collusion with another person or company engaged in the same line business or commerce.

I hereby certify that I am authorized to sign, personally or as a Representative for the Firm:

Name of Firm or Individual: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name and Title

# BOCC AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

**Resolution:** 21-332

**BOCC Meeting Date:** Sept. 21, 2021

**Suggested Wording for Agenda Item:**

**Agenda Type:** Legal Notice

Issue a request for proposals (RFP) Lewis County seeks proposals for the deployment of infrastructure that will provide affordable, equitable, high-speed broadband access in Lewis County

**Contact:** Erik Martin

**Phone:**

**Department:** BOCC - Board of County Commissioners

## Description:

Lewis County seeks proposals for the deployment of infrastructure that will provide affordable, equitable, high-speed broadband access to all residents, businesses, and anchor institutions in unserved areas of the county and support economic development

## Approvals:

User	Status
Amber Smith	Approved
Erik Martin	Pending
PA's Office	Approved

## Publication Requirements:

### Publications:

Chronicle September 23, 26 and 28, 2021

## Additional Copies:

Becky Butler and Erik Martin

## Cover Letter To:

Lewis County EDC